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Pyöry, Noora

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Noora Pyyry & Sirpa Tani

University of Helsinki

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More-than-human playful politics in young people's practices of dwelling with the city

Abstract: This paper is a conceptual argument for more-than-human playful politics in young people's practices of spending their free time in the city. Reworking of urban space happens in a mode of playful experimentation and emerges from human-material encounters in the city: it arises from 'dwelling with'. This understanding grants agency to the material world and has consequences to how we conceptualize everyday politics. Spatial reworking in 'dwelling with' is a more-than-human endeavor in which the city plays an active part: it is joint-participation. When young people are playfully engaged with urban spaces, they are open to being differently with ordinary things and spaces. Openness to difference cultivates meaningful being-in-the-world and makes it possible to rework the city through new associations. Events of reworking become political in certain landscapes. Everyday spatial politics, then, is not always 'serious business' of political coordination – it can also arise from spontaneous intra-active play with the city.

Keywords: dwelling, hanging out, nonrepresentational theory, parkour, play, posthumanism, skateboarding, spatial politics, young people

Introduction

In this paper, we approach young people's everyday practices in the city as brief but vibrant engagements with the world that hold a potential for spatial politics. Change comes forth in encounters of playful experimentation with the urban space: it emerges from 'dwelling with' (see Ingold, 2000). Understanding change, and everyday spatial politics, as something that takes place in encounters of human and the non-human world grants agency to the city with all its unique elements. Accordingly, we approach dwelling from a posthuman, nonrepresentational framework and pay special attention to human-material relations in the taking-place of events (e.g. Anderson, 2009; Anderson & Harrison, 2010; Anderson & Wylie, 2009; Barad, 2003; Bennett, 2010; Dewsbury et al., 2002; McCormack, 2013; Rautio & Winston, 2015; Rose, 2012; Thrift, 2004, 2011). That said, we acknowledge the distinctiveness of human intentionality in the actualization of everyday politics in hanging out. Although conjoint action in urban public space may stem from non-human bodies and materials, it is the thinking and

feeling human subject who makes sense of these events as being political. Nevertheless, this politics does not originate from humans alone, rather it emerges from their complex minglings with urban spaces, as we will show in this paper.

Posthuman and nonrepresentational accounts of (human) action as a relational phenomenon have long been criticized for lack of serious consideration for issues of race, gender, power, and politics (e.g. Barnett, 2008; Hemmings, 2005; Mitchell & Elwood, 2012; Salhanda, 2006; Tolia-Kelly, 2006). This criticism has to do with a claimed absence of differentiated bodies in the theorization. A relational conceptualization of the world means that the human body is approached as a coming-together of forces that work inside and outside of it: it is then never a stable construction (Grosz, 2005). Bodies are always linked with other bodies and never exist outside of *assemblages*, which can be understood as complex, connected units of becoming through which the world emerges (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). Clean-cut categories, such as gender and race, become problematic within this frame. This does not mean that inequalities do not exist. Bodies are marked as valuable or less valuable in a given spacetime, and this influences their capacity to affect. This is true when young people spend time in the city and negotiate their rights to it. Every event is constituted through manifold spatial relations that include memories, histories, and ideologies. Everyday actions build on these relations through which a city (or another system) functions. The force of established orders limits the possibilities of human bodily capacity. Power is embedded in social-material networks, but it works differently in different situations. Human subjectivity is continually built in encounters with the world that is always emerging. Therefore, 'human politics' comes into being within the given social-material circumstances.

This paper is a conceptual argument for more-than-human everyday politics in young people's urban practices. To open up the reasoning, we present a few vignettes from our earlier fieldworks on hanging out (Pyry, 2015a), parkour (Ameel & Tani, 2012a), and young people's other creative ways of engaging with their urban environments in Helsinki and San Francisco. Our methods in these studies included in-depth interviews, photo-walks and photo-talks (Pyry, 2015b), mental mapping as well as different means of participant observation. The vignettes in this paper are not to be treated as evidence of any generalizable phenomenon or young people's lives in the city as such, rather we hope they serve as thought-provoking participants in our story.

'Dwelling with' is joint-participation

We will start with a skateboarding episode in San Francisco to open up our conceptualization of young people's momentary everyday engagements with the city as 'dwelling with' urban spaces (Figure 1). In our vignette, young men were skateboarding in the city. They arrived at a construction site on a downtown street and saw an intriguing opportunity for play. Before this event, the researcher had observed the young men showing their skills when skateboarding on a wall of a building and

doing other tricks while drifting in the city with their boards, sometimes on pedestrian pavement, sometimes midst traffic. Encountering the construction site seemed to make the young men think and engage with the space: they were ‘dwelling with’ the city. It was the ‘trickability’ of the space that hooked them in the emerging event (Woolley & Johns, 2001, p. 224).



Figure 1. Hanging out and contemplating skateboarding tricks in San Francisco. Photo: NP.

As in this vignette from San Francisco, young people’s dwelling with the city consists of passing moments of practical engagement with everyday spaces, but it is often also active marking and claiming urban spaces as their own – even if just for a moment (see Ingold, 2000; Rose, 2012). ‘Dwelling with’ is then *both* habitual immersion with the environment *and* something that must be actively attained: young people’s involvement with the city while hanging out is participation in which the city plays an active part (Pyry, 2016). It is from this *joint-participation* that everyday politics in hanging out emerges (see Massumi, 2011).

Stevens (2007) uses the term ‘urban play’ to describe creative acts through which people expand the boundaries of everyday life. Urban play is contrasted with purposeful, productive work and it often involves encounters with strangers. It is this critique of social order and goal-oriented life that makes young people’s hanging out and other creative ways of being (e.g. graffiti painting, skateboarding and parkour) with their city especially interesting. They show us how urban space can be used as an escape from adult supervision, seriousness and cynicism by geographical play (Pyry, 2016).

Young people's urban play often happens in opposition to hegemonic power, thus the more outlawed and restricted any form of play is, the greater is its attraction as an escape from the limitations of everyday life. As in our vignette, urban play is spontaneous and non-instrumental – even risky – and it is often unanticipated by planners, designers and other users of urban space.

From a posthuman view, the skateboarders did not just decide to stop at this particular scene; rather the construction site invited them to engage with it. The orange construction blocks proposed jumps, they tempted the skateboarders to get involved. Urban play takes place in encounters of things: the material world has a capacity to inspire and thrill the human body; it has *a capacity to produce effects* in it. Bennett (2010) refers to this as 'thing power' when she talks about the liveliness that is internal to materiality. Things act and do, rather than just constrain or afford for human activity (about affordances, see e.g. Bavinton, 2007; Gibson, 1979). This means that the city, and the countless things going on in there, actively affect what comes to be in a given event. The city has agency. When agency is understood as a distributed capacity to affect, it can be described as mix of overlapping and conflicting forces. There are always many things at play in any event. Causality in the world is therefore emergent: it is multidirectional rather than linear (Bennett, 2010, p. 33). The young men did not skateboard in the city, they moved with it.

But, there is more to the event of contemplation in the vignette: not only did the construction site actively encourage the young men to try out exciting skateboarding tricks, but something new emerged from the playful event that followed. Both the skateboarders and the city re-emerged in the encounter, they changed with it. This change of things does not need to be representational to be important, the point is that it is *felt*. This momentary intensity of feeling, *affect*, is the workings of power, it is a force that circulates both within and between bodies: it can then be contagious and transferred (Thrift, 2004). So, a skateboarder does not need to leave a physical mark of his/her activity, but change can take place through a shift in the *affective atmosphere* of the city. As Anderson (2009, p. 77) explains, affective atmospheres 'emanate from but exceed the assembling of bodies', in this case the assembling of young men, skateboards, construction site, ideas of appropriate/cool/resistant behavior, the weather and much more. The felt intensity matters, since it can be taken as an articulation of a change coming into being (see McCormack 2013). The skateboarders re-created the city by 'generous spatial politics of shared existence' (Stratford, 2016, p. 351). This politics is more-than-human.

Hanging out matters

'Geographies of hanging out' is a field of research that looks into how young people spend their free time in public space with their peers without tight schedules or adult supervision, which so often frame their lives in Western societies (Pyyry & Tani, 2016). Although many young people hang out in social media these days, and during their online presence mix their private and public spheres (e.g. boyd, 2008; Hodkinson &

Lincoln, 2008; Lincoln, 2014; Pascoe, 2007), hanging out ‘offline’, in the city or elsewhere, is still an elementary part of many young people’s lives. What is common to both ‘online’ and ‘offline’ hangout spaces, is the way they function as gathering places for young people. The social element of hanging out is thus at the core of the phenomenon. As noted in the introduction, the spaces of hanging out are not only backgrounds or canvases for social activities but active agents in young people’s affectual everyday geographies, just as cell phones can be viewed as vibrant continuations of the human body.

In earlier research, hanging out has been studied most often in the geographical context of urban outdoor spaces (e.g. in parks and streets) or in commercial spaces (review on the earlier research, see Pyry & Tani, 2016). Hanging out in the city covers not only young people’s seemingly passive drifting in urban space, but it also includes more physically active ways of engaging with one’s surroundings without ready-made schedules or strict plans, as was illustrated with the skateboarding vignette. In either case, when relaxing with their peers in the city, young people are usually open to improvisation and new encounters with people, spaces and things. Here lies the potential for spatial politics. Skateboarders and parkour practitioners (*traceurs*) engage with their environments in action, but so do the young people who just ‘actively do nothing’ (Pyry, 2016). With their friends, they claim space by simply being present. Figure 2 points to the diversity and flexibility of hanging out as a phenomenon. It can cover many different things: while some young people are skateboarding, others sit on the square chatting and enjoying the sun. The weather pulls people out of the nearby shopping mall, which often lures teenagers in. The vast space with the smooth surface invites different activities – the space is accessible and open to different modes of involvement.



Figure 2. ‘Spaces of being’ and ‘spaces of doing’ (Thomson & Philo, 2004) are important elements in hanging out. Often these spaces overlap.

Groups of young people move from one place to another, a bit like nomads who go along with what different elements in the environment suggest, continually becoming with the city. Their worlds are not fixed, their subjectivities are emergent. What matters to young people is spending time with friends (Pyry & Tani, 2016; van Lieshout & Aarts, 2008; Woolley, 2006). These kinds of moments of joyous togetherness rework the atmosphere of the city. And even though hanging out is not always fun or playful – it can be boring, and sometimes unpleasant – it is usually deeply affectual, it matters to young people.

All of these different ways of engaging with the city in a drifting, or otherwise different rhythm have potential to challenge the unwritten rules of acceptable behavior in urban public space (Pyry, 2016). Adults are often disturbed by young people's presence, since they may feel threatened by this difference – but it can be argued that this startling feeling is at the core of democracy. Pleasant communities and functionally designed spaces leave very little room for chaos and diversity, which are always part of democratic public life (e.g. Lefebvre, 1968/1996; Mitchell, 2003). Young people's actions in urban space do not often have a clear direction or agenda, but generative events can *become political* in certain landscapes: they are politicized. This view challenges the primacy of representation in what counts as politics. We will now open up this logic by looking at the ways in which young people are kept out of urban public space.

Uninvited: Exclusion of young people from public space

We acknowledge the debates on the public-private divide and the alarming increase of privatization of public spaces in Western cities (e.g. Davis, 1990; Mitchell, 1997; 2003; Staeheli & Mitchell, 2008). For the purposes of this paper, we approach 'public space' on the grounds of its use, not based on its ownership or governance. Understood this way, 'public space' also covers many privately owned spaces, such as shopping malls, which can be viewed as the new town centers since they are often used by people as public meeting places (Thomas, 2005; Vanderbeck & Johnson, 2000). With this focus, we move the emphasis from regulative practices and governance to highlighting the potential that dwelling with urban spaces has in opening up the city for diverse ways of being.

The geographical research on hanging out pays special attention to young people's positions in urban public spaces at a time when their opportunities for independent mobility, notably in the Western world, have been decreased (e.g. Shaw et al., 2015). There are many affecting issues behind this trend presented in previous studies: privatization of public space (e.g. Mitchell, 2003; Staeheli & Mitchell, 2008), tightened ideas of safety (e.g. Koskela, 2009; Pain & Smith, 2008), and connected to this, increased parental anxiety (e.g. Katz, 2006; O'Brien, Jones, Sloan & Rustin, 2000;

cf. Mitra, Faulkner, Buliung & Stone, 2014). This process has cut back young people's time in public space, and thus threatened their right to the city (on 'right to the city', see e.g. Belda-Miguel et al., 2016; Harvey, 2003; Iveson, 2013; Lefebvre, 1968/1996; Low & Smith, 2006; Marcuse 2009; Mayer, 2009; Mitchell, 2003; Staeheli & Mitchell, 2008). This development, together with the widely shared mindset of 'life as a personal project' in which one should always stay productive, takes part in politicizing young people's hanging out in the city.

As suggested above, having the time and space to just hang out is becoming increasingly scarce for many (especially 'middle class') young people. Malone (2007) talks about the 'bubble-wrap generation' when she refers to today's children and young people, who often spend their days by attending to one organized and supervised activity after another and are thus constantly under adult monitoring at schools, hobbies, and mostly also at home. When parents drive young people around the city to keep them safe, they further restrict their independent mobility. One reason for this 'bubble-wrapping' is a constant worry about possible dangers that children could face when not supervised. With the restlessness and political insecurity in many countries now, safety has become a highly mediatized issue. In this atmosphere, it is difficult to resist the desire for added security. At the same time, young people's need to 'break free' from adult guidance and gaze is understandable in this overtly planned everyday life. The situation makes the question of rights to public space ever more relevant.

Young people are often guided to spend their time at designated areas such as skate parks, playgrounds and youth clubs by functional urban planning (e.g. Aitken, 2001). While these spaces are convenient for their proposed function, they take part in the re-production of the prevailing urban order. Franck & Stevens (2007; also Pyyry, 2017) have noted that these kinds of carefully planned spaces can be justified by their aim of creating ideal spaces for a specific target group of users but, despite the good intention, they simultaneously produce 'tight spaces' where other type of activities are not allowed, or at least not welcomed. While the planned spaces can be effectively used for their designed function, the risks of unplanned encounters and surprises are reduced, since improvisation feels unwelcome and people thus conform to the established norms of behavior and movement. If these norms and materialities are taken for granted, young people have few opportunities for playing with who and how they are. Often designed spaces are safe and entertaining enough to keep people content – and therefore open experimentation is reduced (Thrift, 2011). Along with tightened notions of safety, functional urban planning therefore takes part in cultivating political passivity (Pyyry, 2017).

In conjunction with functional planning, young people are controlled in and 'planned out' from public space by numerous other means (see Skelton & Gough, 2013). These forms of predictive policing include various prohibition signs, security cameras, curved benches, skateboarding blockers and much more. Spaces include many hints about who is welcome, but people are also governed by specifically designed affective atmospheres (Anderson, 2009). Strategic design regulates urban lives in ways that often go unnoticed. Music, scents, lights, colors and other visual cues engineer our movement in the city, especially at commercial spaces (Pyyry, 2016). They make

people feel comfortable and at ease: it is the satisfaction of the immediate – *panem et circenses*. This all brings down the eagerness for political activity in public space. Everyday life is, in many ways, a planned business. In this framework, spatial improvisation becomes political: it can create space for diversity, as we will show in the next section.

Improvisation with the city is imagining alternative ones

One interesting form of creative engagement with urban space and its different elements is parkour, which is becoming increasingly popular among children and young people (Figure 3). Parkour practitioners, *traceurs*, form an affectual, spatial-embodied relationship with their hanging out spaces. They follow the material environment based on its features; different surfaces and various natural and built forms catch their attention. *Traceurs* talk about a specific ‘parkour vision’ or ‘parkour eyes’, with which they read their environment: for them, the environment sends invites for parkour even when they are just walking in the city without any practicing in mind (Ameel & Tani, 2012b; Saville, 2008). Surfaces also give hands and feet suggestions and alerts, leading the *traceur*’s way by touch. In parkour, *traceurs* engage with the space *intra-actively* (Barad, 2003); spaces and things are not just affordances for them, rather they take part in the practice and movement. In the event of a performed stunt of urban (re)discovery, different actors ‘become a state of singularity’ (Mould, 2009, p. 744). Skateboarders’ relationship with their environment is similar (e.g. Borden, 2001; Chiu, 2009; Woolley & Johns, 2001). Due to the openness of their way of being, they move and discuss with the city by following its surprising and playful leads.



Figure 3. Parkour practitioners (traceurs) treat the city as their training track and follow its lead in movement. Photo: ST.

Likewise, when hanging out, young people are generally receptive to the call of the city and whatever may emerge in their joint-participation with it. Hanging out is often pleasantly purposeless, and it therefore works against the demand of always needing to be productive: it is a getaway from the social order of the adult world. While hanging out, young people rarely have fixed plans or timetables and are therefore open to new encounters and changes of direction. This makes space for playing with the city. Being with friends, not doing anything but relaxing and having fun, allows for creativity when the situation calls for it. This creativity does not need to be understood as human cleverness, but rather as a shared refusal to settle down into taken-for-granted patterns of being. This noncompliance can be sensed within the affective atmosphere of a given space.

We argue that this receptive way of being fosters involvement with urban spaces and entails potential for more-than-human politics. In the playful mode of hanging out, young people deepen their relationship with the city; they dwell with it. This is important at a time of increased surveillance, restrictive policies justified by the ‘security talk’, and highly functional urban planning, which leaves very little space for improvisation. But, although life in cities is controlled in many ways, as shown in the previous section, spaces are not stable. Amin and Thrift (2002) conceptualize cities as *moments of encounter*, shifting events that unfold in everyday life. When tight spaces are encountered in the playful mode of hanging out, normative ways of being are challenged. This is resistance to the prevailing present that always constrains the potential of the event, but is never in full control of it. In its radical resistance and creativity, play becomes political (see Aitken, 2001; 2014). But, this resistance does not need to happen in an oppositional relation to hegemonic power, rather it emerges in opening up new spaces of becoming. In the event of playful encounter with urban spaces, momentary *micro-atmospheres of joy* are created (Pyry, 2016). This ephemeral alternative city makes it possible to be somehow otherwise.

Towards more-than-human playful politics

Everyday life consists of small, often routine practices, through which the world is experienced, but which easily pass unnoticed; these practices, however, shape both young people and the world with which they dwell (e.g. Ameel & Tani, 2012a; Horton & Kraftl, 2006; Pyry, 2016). Revolutions are exceptional events; more often change takes place gradually. And even big transitions, such as the Arab Spring, often originate from numerous small events that have taken place without much attention. As our vignettes suggest, creative engagement with urban spaces challenges the taken-for-granted ways of being in the city. In activities such as skateboarding and parkour this is easily detectable, but in just hanging out the negotiations are much subtler – as mentioned, they might happen simply through a change in the affective atmosphere of a given space. Playful engagement with the city opens up space for alternative ways of

being, because it encourages creativity and questioning (also Aitken, 2001; Crossa, 2012; Lefebvre, 1968/1996). This engagement with urban spaces takes place in intra-active play: the city and young people are ‘in it’ together (also Rautio & Winston, 2015). But, rather than only playing with a world that already *is*, new worlds are created through this embodied involvement (e.g. Thrift, 2004; Woodyer, 2012). From here, more-than-human playful politics can unfold.

A playful experience of being engaged with the city is often intensely affectual, and it attunes a person to the world differently. It is important to note that this play is much more than a form of behavior that can be observed from the outside; it is a ‘mode’ of being that can be characterized with openness to the world. It is joyous ontological energy that works against the heaviness of neoliberal framing of life (see Braidotti, 2013). Play is a disruption. It quickly jolts the atmosphere of a space, and sometimes an arbitrary ‘we’ becomes a politicized public (see Amin, 2015). Jane Bennett (2010) thinks of politics as an ecology: diverse materialities come together to form confederations when affected by a common problem. The response forms the political event.

Kraftl (2013) aptly reminds children’s geographers, and others, that human lives should not be ‘branded political’ for them to matter. Urban everyday life is so much more, meaningful as such. It exceeds the political. Still, at the same time, it is important to view politics beyond representation, and beyond serious organized (adult) action (e.g. Aitken, 2014; Kallio & Häkli, 2013; Kraftl, 2015; Skelton, 2013). Kallio and Häkli (2011) talk about young people’s ‘voiceless politics’. They remind us that it is crucial to recognize this ‘non-participation’ as politics, to prevent the further marginalization of those young people. This is an important argument as such, but by discussing hanging out as a joint-participation of young people and the city, we have approached this affective spatial politics from a different perspective. Politics is in the practices of dwelling with, it precedes speech and verbal reflection, and it is always a more-than-human endeavor.

Conceptualizing urban everyday politics as something that arises from dwelling with the city means that the world is approached through events instead of looking at it through subject-object relations (Massumi, 2011). Human beings are always fundamentally part of the world in which they live. Everyday politics is always joint-participation, a unity of movement where human intentionality is one form of power, strengthened by (and often in competition with) other forms. It is from this complex mingling of human and the non-human/material that new bodies and spaces are created (Anderson & Wylie, 2009). Playful dwelling with the city is then much more than just human appropriation of urban space; an event of play generates spaces, worlds that have never been before. It is from the mutual, entangled play of young people and diverse urban elements that everyday more-than-human politics in hanging out emerges from.

That said, young people’s dwelling with the city often has a *perspective*: landscape is marked out and made visible by small acts of ‘building’ (see Rose, 2012). In our story, this building involves alternative, often transient, ways of appropriating the city. Spaces are ‘owned’ temporarily via creative interruption of routine practices

by which hierarchies are maintained (see Pyyry, 2016). Politics in hanging out is about probing the limits of existence – by drawing attention to the limits of everyday life (see Lefebvre, 1968/1996; Foucault, 1969/2002). This politics precedes thought and reflection. It is about *being* in another way. Circumstances arise and openings for being differently are created by meaningfully engaging with urban spaces.

Moreover, involved activity deepens one's ties with the environment and builds respect for it. As Bennett (2001) notes, love of life cultivates ethical being-in-the-world. People tend to care for the ones they are meaningfully involved with. Here, ethics is not only about considering power relations, but about how we do existence *per se*. By hanging out and having fun in the city, young people claim the city as theirs and take part in creating 'loose' spaces (see Tani, 2015). Change takes place through the affectual, through experiencing vitality in urban play (see Woodyer, 2012). Sitting on the ground, stairs or floors and spending time at shopping malls without buying anything are just few of the many ways in which young people question the written and unwritten adult rules, along with the boundaries of public and private. Often this questioning is unintentional. Functional 'tight' spaces (such as stairs or railings) are used creatively in unconventional ways and space is cleared for difference. New spaces are imagined and momentary loose spaces are made within the urban order. And, indeed, this order is never stable: difference inserts itself to it surprisingly and jolts the seemingly stable world from its course. Cities are energized and animated in play (see Lobo, 2016). Being differently, whether it is in the form of parkour, skateboarding or just 'actively doing nothing' makes the rules of acceptable behavior visible, and most importantly felt.

The central concept of this Special Issue, *hyper-diversity*, aims to grasp the diversification within different groups of young people (and others), especially in cities (Tasan-Kok et al., 2014). In this article, we have gone beyond anthropocentrism in thinking about diversity: from a posthuman point of view, the city itself plays an important role in creating difference and making space for diverse ways of being. This creation takes place moment-to-moment through young people's meaningful involvement with their urban surroundings. Together with the city, young people invent new worlds. In a posthuman frame, hyper-diversity could then refer to the manifold human-material configurations that emerge through everyday practices. In its present use, the concept misses the materiality of everydayness. People do not work urban space alone, but rather go with numerous transitory cues that the city provokes them with. Midst the hyper-diversity of the materials and bodies entangled in the practices of dwelling, events may become politicized. Young people, skateboards, spaces and things come together in a unity of movement, and from this assembling new worlds are created. Indeed, the city – buildings, streets, human and non-human dwellers, sounds, scents, ideologies, and much more – is a forever unfolding moment of encounter. The city takes part in its own hyper-diversity, it moves with people's everyday practices. Sometimes it acts against young people's efforts, sometimes it works together with them – most often it does both and more. The city fascinates, captivates, irritates and interrogates. It has a capacity to affect and be affected, and this is key to political agency (Bennett, 2010).

Conclusions

In this paper, our aim has been to highlight the importance of young people's right to spend time and engage with their urban surroundings without ready-made plans: their right to dwell with the city. The practices that we have referred to in this article matter greatly whether or not they are intentional or verbalized, because much of everyday life runs through them. They matter whether or not they become politicized in a given urban landscape. Often young people's practices and alternative styles, such as graffiti, skateboarding gear or 'girl power', are incorporated into the neoliberal system – and sold back to a larger audience. That said, it is important to acknowledge the political potential of these creative practices – dismissing them would only further marginalize young people in public space.

Hanging out with friends is often pleasantly airy: it is a release from the seriousness of the adult world. We argue that this openness fosters engagement with urban spaces and entails potential for spatial criticism and reworking the city through new associations. While engaging with the city by skateboarding, doing parkour or just drifting, young people often enter a 'mode' of playfulness. Play opens up space for imaginative thinking and new ways of being. A surprising moment of being caught up in urban play can change the way one looks at ordinary, everyday things. This is important at a time of increased surveillance, restrictive policies justified by the 'security talk', and highly functional urban planning, which leaves very little space for improvisation. Young people, among others, are guided to spend their time at designated areas and their independent mobility is often highly restricted. This makes hanging out in the city a political event.

When young people's presence and ways of being are valued, or even just tolerated, the city opens up for other alternative practices of dwelling, as well. Therefore, young people's dwelling with the city is not only about appropriating urban space and making it their own, it is about inventing new worlds. Openness to the unpredictable makes space for reflection about the way things stand. Moreover, involved activity deepens one's relationship with any environment and builds respect and care for it. It is thus not only crucial that young people have the time and space to hang out in their cities, but it is essential for ethical urban life more broadly. The possibility of being otherwise, somehow differently, will cultivate lively and diverse cities that are both interesting and provocative. Commotion and chaos are part of democratic life, since a city that does not allow for difference, eventually becomes a tight space for all.

We have conceptualized young people's dwelling with the city as a joint-participation from which spatial politics can arise. The importance of this participation is not determined by its intentionality or outcomes. It is also not defined by human agency, rather it always takes place with the material surroundings: numerous forces, events, and processes take part in the matter of worldly involvement. Urban hyper-diversity, then, exceeds human lifestyles and thinking. Hyper-diversity is not just human practices in the city, but rather a complex assemblage of humans-with-the-city-

plus-more. From this viewpoint, human participation is always a process of becoming with the world, not an outcome or end point that can ever be reached. When hanging out in the city, young people take part in urban life and in the creation of its fleeting atmospheres. They are involved with places that are important to them and claim these as their own, even if just temporarily. Though not coordinated in their activities, young people offer a political response, not of protest but of practice and interrogation. This is resistance to the dominant present that limits young people's rights to the city. The response emerges from dwelling with urban spaces in creative ways: it is more-than-human playful politics enacted by diverse elements drawn together in conjoint movement.

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